

Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care Foster Policies and Procedures Manual



Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care
3200 Carr
Houston, TX 77026
Shelter Services: 713.229.7300
Community Involvement Contact: BARCfosters@cityofhouston.net
www.houstonbarc.com

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care (BARC) Foster Program! We are very grateful to have you as a part of our team. We hope that your affiliation with BARC will be extremely rewarding. You can have a huge impact on the lives of homeless animals. The support of fosters is critical to the success of BARC and the fulfillment of our mission.

We look forward to collaborating with you and finding every dog and cat a forever home!

Mission Statement

The Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care promotes and protects public health and animal care through animal law enforcement, sheltering, pet placement programs, and pet ownership education.

BARC staff and volunteers share the values of professionalism, responsibility, compassion, commitment, integrity, and accountability with our community partners. These values are exhibited through:

- Providing animal control and care services that minimize fear, pain, stress and suffering to animals in and out of the shelter
- Providing safe and healthy human-animal interactions
- Providing humane, efficient, high-quality care of animals in our shelter
- Promoting responsible pet ownership including licensing, vaccinations, and spaying/neutering
- Promoting compassion toward animals in and out of the shelter

Thank You!

We would like to thank you for choosing to participate in our program. Fosters are a valuable asset to our organization and to the many animals that need loving homes.

For decades, BARC has provided a multitude of services to the residents and animals of the City of Houston. Current services include sheltering animals, spaying and neutering adoptable animals, animal control services, low cost Microchipping, and pet licensing. Since your work as a Foster is so extremely important, your decision to affiliate with BARC must be made with the full understanding of the commitment and responsibility it demands.

This manual has been prepared for you as a reference guide. It contains information regarding our Foster Policies and Procedures as well as general information about BARC.

Thank you for giving your time and energy to the animals at Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care. We hope that your work with BARC will be as rewarding to you as it is to the animals.

Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care

Services BARC offers

- Sheltering Animals
- Spaying and Neutering of Adoptable Animals
- Animal Control Services
- Low Cost Microchipping
- Pet Licensing
- Vaccinations

Hours of Operation

- Animal Adoption Center (to adopt a dog or cat)
- Animal Regulation / Control (to drop off a sick or injured animal)
- Animal Surrender (to drop off a pet the pet owner can no longer maintain)

Monday - Friday: 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM

Saturday - Sunday: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

- Clinic Hours for Adopters, Fosters, and Rescue Groups

Monday - Friday: 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Saturday - Sunday: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Contact Information

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3200 Carr
Houston, TX 77026

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Foster Policies and Procedures

Foster Policy

The Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care (BARC) Foster Program seeks to provide supplemental care to animals with special needs, to decrease the rate of euthanasia, to increase the rate of animal adoptions, and to expand public relations within the community.

Foster care may be provided to animals that:

- Require socialization and/or training
- Have temporary health problems (e.g. malnourished, healing wound, etc.)
- Are too young or ill to be adopted, or are pregnant or nursing
- Have a temporary condition affecting their physical appearance (e.g. an animal that needs to be shaved, has ringworm, mange, etc.)
- Suffer from kennel / cage stress
- May be euthanized for lack of shelter space

Foster Requirements

To become an Approved Foster, a volunteer must:

- Submit a BARC Foster Application.
- Be 18 years or older.
- Show proper identification.
- Be able to provide a safe, loving and stable environment for the foster animal.
- Be willing to nurse an injury and/or illness — with the understanding that some issues may result in the death of an animal.
- Be able to transport the foster animal to and from BARC during normal BARC business hours.
- Complete an interview with the Community Involvement Coordinator.
- If applicable, provide proof that their landlord allows companion animals.
- Be approved by the Community Involvement Coordinator.
- Sign the BARC Foster Agreement.

An applicant may be refused Approved Foster status if, among other things, he/she:

- Demonstrates or acts in an aggressive or cruel manner towards an animal in the presence of a BARC employee or volunteer.
- Was convicted, suspected or under investigation for animal cruelty.
- Has left dead animals on property.
- Has left an animal in a vehicle in extreme weather conditions that caused death to the animal.
- Has a home environment that is not conducive to fostering a companion animal.
- Has one or more members of the household who do not want animals.
- Clearly states that he/she or a member of the household is allergic to animals.
- Has repeatedly violated license, at-large or nuisance provisions of municipal, county or state code.
- Cannot provide the animal with proper care, or cannot keep the animal confined or contained.
- Appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- Indicates that a pet recently died of an infectious disease that could risk the health of a foster animal.
- Previously fostered from BARC and did not honor the Foster Agreement.
- Previously refused to return an animal as requested by BARC.

When you become an Approved Foster, we ask that you abide by the following guidelines:

- Adhere to all BARC policies and procedures.
- Respond within 24 hours to communications from BARC staff or potential adopters.
- Immediately report to BARC staff any aggressive behavior by the foster animal.
- Respect the premises by returning them to orderly condition after use.
- Inform the Community Involvement Coordinator regarding concerns about animal health, safety, and facility conditions as well as issues that need improvement. Fosters may also submit suggestions and concerns by email to BARCfosters@cityofhouston.net.
- Provide changes in your BARC Foster Application personal information (i.e. name, address, phone, e-mail, household occupancy) to the Community Involvement Coordinator in a timely manner so that all records can be kept up to date.

Foster Procedures

- Processing of Animals
 - Potential foster animals are processed according to normal BARC intake procedures.
 - Each animal will be tested for heartworms or FELV/FIV and given vaccines, in accordance with regular intake protocol.
- Selection of Animals
 - Community Involvement Coordinator may contact Fosters by phone or email when potential foster animals are identified.
 - Potential foster animals will be posted on foster web groups.
 - Approved Fosters may tour BARC or review the BARC website to select an animal to foster.
- Pick Up of Foster Animal
 - The Foster should visit BARC and sign in at the front desk. The Community Involvement Coordinator or designee will be notified.
 - Appointments are encouraged but not required.
 - Community Involvement Coordinator will assist the foster with the retrieval of foster animals, if necessary.
 - The foster may tour the facility to locate additional foster animals.
 - Foster may consult with veterinary staff for advice on the care of the animal or to have a Microchip inserted.
 - Foster should visit the Customer Service counter, where the foster arrangement will be recorded.
 - All foster arrangements will be reviewed every 90 days. If an animal remains in foster care after 90 days, one of the following must occur:
 - Foster personally adopts the animal from BARC and pays applicable adoption fees;
 - Foster identifies and presents a possible adopter to BARC for adoption facilitation; or
 - Foster returns the animal to BARC.
- Adoptions
 - Animals in foster care are available to the public for adoption.

- A binder containing the kennel cards of foster animals will be placed in the lobby, to be viewed by members of the public that wish to adopt an animal from BARC.
- Fosters are encouraged to take their animals to off-site BARC adoption events. A schedule of events is available on the BARC website. Please notify the Community Involvement Coordinator if you plan to bring a Foster animal to an off-site adoption event; 48 hours notice would be appreciated.
- If BARC locates an adopter, the Foster will be notified and required to return the animal to BARC.
- Fosters are permitted to adopt animals in their care, if they qualify under the normal BARC adoption guidelines. To adopt an animal, the Foster must come to BARC or attend an off-site BARC Adoption event to complete the BARC Adoption Application and pay applicable adoption fees.
- If the Foster identifies a potential adopter for the animal, the Foster should instruct the potential adopter to come to BARC or to attend an off-site BARC adoption event to complete the BARC Adoption Application and pay applicable adoption fees.
- Transfers to Rescue Groups
 - All transfers of foster animals between Fosters and Rescue Groups must be administered by BARC.
 - If a Foster desires to transfer a foster animal to a Rescue Group, the Foster must return to BARC to submit the paperwork necessary to relinquish responsibility for the animal. The Rescue Group must then complete the standard rescue transfer process, including the payment of applicable transfer fees.
- Reclaimed Animals
 - If an animal is reclaimed by its owner, the Foster must return the animal to BARC. Expenses incurred by the Foster may or may not be reimbursed by the owner.
- Death of a Foster Animal
 - Foster should notify the Community Involvement Coordinator if an animal dies while in the Foster's care.
- Return of Foster Animals
 - If, for any reason, a Foster can no longer provide care for the foster animal, the Foster may return the animal to BARC during normal business hours.

Care of Foster Animals

- Unless surrendered by the owner, animals must be held at BARC for three full business days after arrival (the "Impoundment Period").
- Nonetheless, animals may be placed in foster care prior to the end of the Impoundment Period for medical reasons ("Medical Release"). Conditions that may justify a Medical Release include:
 - Upper respiratory infection
 - Ringworm
 - High heartworm positive status
 - Puppies or kittens five months old or younger
 - Neonatal
 - Pregnancy
 - Having been hit by a car and/or having broken bones
 - Mange (sarcoptic)
- If a Foster picks up an animal prior to the end of the Impoundment Period under a Medical Release, the Foster may not spay or neuter the animal or perform other non-essential surgeries before the end of the three full days.

- Foster may bring the animal to the BARC veterinary office during normal business hours for evaluation and care. There is no charge associated with veterinary care administered at BARC for foster animals.
 - Veterinary services provided at BARC include:
 - Routine vaccinations.
 - Dewormer as needed (every two weeks).
 - Heartworm testing and FELV/FIV testing.
 - Sterilization.
 - Insertion of Microchip.
 - Care of minor illnesses treatable with antibiotics.
- Except for the limited menu of veterinary services provided at no charge at BARC, the Foster is responsible for the care and expenses of care of all foster animals.
- Foster animals may be taken to the Foster's private veterinarian at the expense of the Foster.
 - Fosters must provide the Community Involvement Coordinator copies of records regarding any veterinary care a foster animal receives outside of BARC.

Privacy

- Any information pertaining to BARC records and cases which you may become privileged to (including names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) as a result of your affiliation with BARC is confidential and may not be discussed with others, except as may be required by law.
- Under some circumstances, BARC staff may be prohibited from discussing with you certain specific details regarding cases that are under investigation or pending criminal court action.
- Your residential address and residential phone number will not be disclosed or provided to anyone unless specifically authorized by you or as may be required by law.

Animal Safety

- We ask that you follow strictly all BARC policies related to animal and people safety.
- You are required to wash your hands and/or change your gloves before and after each animal encounter, after cleaning animal cages or animal-care areas, and after contact with feces, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, exudates, or articles contaminated by these substances.
- In the Adoption Center, Fosters must use a hand sanitizer after each animal contact.

Accidents or Injury Reporting

- All accidents or injuries sustained by you at BARC MUST be reported immediately to the Community Involvement Coordinator. A bite or scratch is considered an injury and must be treated immediately.
- You are required to fill out an accident or injury report for every incident. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.
- In an emergency situation, please focus on safety first!
- When treating an animal bite, you should:
 - Notify the Community Involvement Coordinator.
 - Flush the bite and surrounding area with soap and water or peroxide followed by water.
 - Fill out a Bite Report. The Bite Case unit will need this information to complete its investigation.
 - We encourage you to seek medical attention from your primary physician.

Resignations and Terminations

- If you choose to leave the BARC Foster Program, please notify the Community Involvement Coordinator to be removed from the Approved Foster list.
- BARC can elect to terminate or suspend your participation in the BARC Foster Program. Reasons for termination can include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Failure to follow the BARC Foster Agreement and guidelines indicated in this policy
 - Inhumane treatment or mistreatment of animals
 - Misconduct with or abuse of staff, volunteers or citizens
 - Falsification of BARC records, including the Foster Application
 - Insubordination
 - Theft
 - Possession of drugs or alcohol
 - Use of or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at BARC or BARC-related events
 - Presence in off-limit areas at BARC
 - Failure to return animals as requested by BARC
 - Deliberate destruction of BARC's or an individual's property
 - Possession of unauthorized weapons or dangerous materials on the BARC facility or at BARC-related events
 - Any other justifiable reason deemed appropriate by the Community Involvement Coordinator

Grievance Procedure

- If you are terminated from the BARC Foster Program, you have the right to appeal to BARC management.
- A written request for an appeal should be sent to the BARC Bureau Chief, Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care, 3200 Carr Street, Houston, Texas 77026.

Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care Foster Application

Thank you for opening your heart and home to the animals at BARC. Please take a few minutes to complete this form and return it to the Customer Service window.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Date of Birth (Month/Day/Year): _____

Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Preferred method of contact: ☐ E-mail ☐ Home Telephone ☐ Mobile Telephone

HOME INFORMATION

Do you have a Kennel License? _____ YES _____ NO
(If no, fostering may put you over the legal pet limit of 3 dogs or a combination of 4 dogs and/or cats.)

Do you own or rent your home? _____ Own _____ Rent

If Rent, provide Landlord's Name and Contact Number: _____

Are there any breed / size / number restrictions or other applicable tenant restrictions where you live? If yes, please list. _____

List all other adults in your home:	Do they agree with fostering?	
_____	YES	NO
_____	YES	NO
_____	YES	NO

Number of children in the home _____ Age(s) of child(ren) _____

List any regular visitors who might have contact with BARC fosters:

How many hours will a foster be left alone? _____

How will you confine the foster when you are not home?

_____ Kennel (Please describe dimensions and build of kennel) _____

_____ Crate (Please describe dimensions of crate) _____

_____ Free Roaming (inside) _____ Other (Please describe) _____

YOUR PETS

Type	Breed	Age	Current on Vaccinations?	Altered?
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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Will your pets be accepting of fosters? ____YES ____NO

If no, how will you keep them separate? _____

Do any of your pets have a communicable disease? If yes, list pets and diseases.

Have you ever had a complaint filed with Animal Control? ____YES ____NO

Please indicate the types of fostering you can provide:

CATS

- _____ Bottle-fed kittens
- _____ Cats with respiratory infections
- _____ Cats that are injured
- _____ Pregnant cats
- _____ Cats with kittens
- _____ Cats who are cat aggressive
- _____ Cats who are fearful
- _____ Cats with heart worms
- _____ OTHER: _____

DOGS

- _____ Bottle-fed puppies
- _____ Dogs with kennel cough
- _____ Dogs that are injured
- _____ Pregnant dogs
- _____ Dogs with puppies
- _____ Dogs who are cat or dog aggressive
- _____ Dogs who are fearful
- _____ Dogs with heart worms
- _____ OTHER: _____

Length of time willing to foster: _____

Notes or restrictions: _____

REFERENCES

Name of your personal veterinarian: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Please provide three references:

Name	Relationship	Telephone Number
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

<p style="text-align: center;">Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care Foster Agreement</p>
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I, _____, (print name) hereby acknowledge the following policies and agree to abide by them during the entire time I am fostering animals for Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care. (Sign your initials on each policy line.)

1. _____ Foster and his/her family agree to follow all relevant procedures and guidelines regarding any BARC animals placed in his/her care, and will make no decisions or take any actions regarding the animal's veterinary care (including euthanasia) or placement (temporary or permanent) without approval of BARC representatives. Foster further agrees to respect any decisions made by BARC regarding the animal and to help execute these decisions when possible. The animal remains the property of BARC and can be removed from the Foster's home at any time and without prior notice.
2. _____ Foster agrees to provide the animal entrusted to his/her care with adequate, nutritious food, water, shelter, affection, socialization, and exercise as he/she would his/her own pets. The Foster agrees to provide any basic training or treatment necessary to the well being of the animal and to help increase adoptability. Foster further agrees to treat the animal in a kind and respectful manner, encouraging good behavior and confidence in order to create a more well-adjusted, adoptable animal. Foster will not strike or otherwise physically harm any foster animal, or allow anyone else, relative or otherwise, to do so. At no time during which Foster is entrusted with any BARC animal(s) will the number of animals -personal and fosters combined - in the Foster's home (including garage) exceed that which can be cared for in a sanitary and healthy manner. The Foster will not be compensated for expenses incurred in the normal daily care of the animal, including but not limited to food, water, shelter and room and board.
3. _____ Fosters must keep all foster animals safe and secured in a manner to avoid escape of the foster animal.
4. _____ Foster further agrees to permit a BARC representative to enter the Foster's home for the purpose of inspection of the animal and/or the premises with 24-hours notice, and to allow for immediate removal of the animal if the situation warrants, at the sole discretion of the BARC representative. Foster is also aware an Animal Control representative may visit his/her premises for animals rescued from BARC.
5. _____ Foster agrees to notify BARC staff immediately of any kind of problem concerning the animal that should arise during foster care.
6. _____ Foster understands that this agreement does not in any way confer upon Foster the right to independently rescue animals under the auspices of BARC and that BARC reserves and has the right and the sole discretion to admit any independently rescued animals into its system.

7. _____ BARC will provide veterinary care at no charge for all foster animals. Expenses for services obtained from other sources shall be the financial responsibility of the Foster.
8. _____ Fostering can sometimes last several weeks, possibly even months. During that time, Foster agrees to be available to show the animal at BARC or BARC adoption events if called upon. If BARC finds an adopter for the animal, the Foster agrees to return the animal to BARC.
9. _____ All animals placed in foster care are the property of BARC and must be returned to BARC upon request. The foster animal cannot be transferred to another party or another location without approval from BARC. The animal shall not be transferred or given to any individual or to any retail or wholesale establishment for the purpose of sale or resale to the public, nor to any research institution.
10. _____ Foster agrees to be courteous, helpful and honest to potential adopters and to fully cooperate in accommodating those who wish to see the animal.
11. _____ If the Foster cannot keep the animal, he/she shall notify BARC immediately. Foster agrees to give BARC as much notice as possible should this situation arise and understands that while alternative arrangements will be made in a timely manner, space availability varies and time constraints will dictate the amount of time needed to facilitate the animal's return.
12. _____ BARC cannot be responsible for any medical or other expenses incurred for the Foster's personal pets, which may result from fostering an animal. The Foster should ensure that all of his/her pets are up to date on their vaccinations (including, without limitation, Rabies, Feline Panleukopenia/Distemper, Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Feline Calicivirus, Feline Pneumonitis, Feline Leukemia; Dog: Bordatella, DHLPP, Rabies) prior to bringing the foster animal into the home. BARC is not responsible for any events and/or damages that may occur as a result of fostering the animal. The Foster does hereby release, discharge and hold harmless BARC and BARC staff with liability from any and all claims, damages, costs, expenses, loss of services, actions, and causes of actions, whether known or unknown, belonging to the said Foster due to any action or occurrence from the date of this Agreement arising out of or in connection with the fostering of any BARC foster animal.

BARC Designee

Date

Foster (Signature)

Date

Foster (Printed Name)